

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 10, 2010

TO: Arianne Preite

FROM: Kristen Yee

SUBJECT: Addendum No. 2 to the Natural Environment Study (NES) for the Bolsa Chica Roadway Embankment Reconstruction Project

This is Addendum No. 2 to the Bolsa Chica Roadway Embankment Reconstruction Project Natural Environment Study (NES) Report prepared by LSA Associates, Inc. (LSA) in August 2009 for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 12 (Addendum No. 1 was prepared on March 3, 2010, to address the addition of a metal beam guard rail (MBGR) and pedestrian safety cable rail). The NES Report has not been circulated for public review due to the project's classification as an emergency. Emergency projects are considered exempt from the requirements of CEQA, thus, a Statutory Exemption (SE) was prepared. This Addendum No. 2 will become an additional attachment to the NES Report and will be circulated for public review hereafter. Potential disturbance to migratory and nesting birds due to the proposed project design refinements discussed in Addendum No. 1 are addressed in this Addendum.

Project Location and Setting

The Bolsa Chica Roadway Embankment Reconstruction Project is located in the City of Huntington Beach in Orange County within the jurisdiction of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 12. The project extends along a segment of State Route 1 (SR-1), also known as Pacific Coast Highway (PCH), between Warner Avenue and Seapoint Avenue (refer to Figure 1; all figures attached). Post miles (PM) for the biological study area (BSA) range from PM 28.7 to PM 29.7.

SR-1 was added to the state highway system by the State Highway Board Amendment of 1919. The segment of SR-1 affected by the proposed project is a four-lane conventional highway that runs northwest and southeast, with two lanes in each direction.

The Bolsa Chica Ecological Reserve lies north-northeast of the project area, and Bolsa Chica State Beach is located to the west. A small planned community is located to the north, just past Warner Avenue. The project lies within the Coastal Zone of the California Coastal Act of 1976.

Both the original and refined project designs occur within the BSA as defined here and as shown on Figure 1. All work will be completed within the Caltrans right-of-way (ROW).

Purpose

The original emergency project will preserve the publicly owned and operated facility in a safe, efficient, and continuously usable condition, thereby maintaining coastal access and mobility for the traveling public. The emergency project will also protect the adjacent estuarine environment from sloughing of the roadway embankment and the deposition of the road base and asphalt rubble. Proposed project refinements will bring the traffic safety to current Caltrans design standards for Clear Recovery Zone requirements and will help prevent any injuries to pedestrians and the motoring public.

Emergency Project

The emergency project originally described in the NES was proposed to protect the roadway embankments on SR-1 from further erosion and degradation by restoring the partially washed out highway embankment/shoulder pavement. Sheet piling 30 feet (ft) in depth was installed along approximately 475 ft of the roadway and 5 ft from the edge of the asphalt.

Project construction occurred between July 27, 2009, and August 7, 2009, from approximately 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. during weekdays only. Initial project activities included potholing for utility verification and installation of detour signs. Between July 28 and July 31, 475 ft of sheet piling was installed to 30 ft in depth, approximately 5 ft from the edge of the asphalt shoulder. Sheet piles were then trimmed and backfilled with sand to a level equal to existing shoulder elevations. During the second week of construction, final trimming and backfilling occurred. The damaged shoulder of the road was then removed and paved. All work was completed following the monitoring and reporting requirements specified in the NES (LSA, August 2009).

A postconstruction summary of monitoring results and assessment of project-related impacts is provided in the Revised Biological Construction Monitoring and Impact Assessment Report for the Bolsa Chica Roadway Embankment Reconstruction Project (LSA, February 2010).

Project Refinements

The refined project falls within the same geographic limits as the previously described emergency project. The refined project proposes to install approximately 538 ft (2.4 ft high) of MBGR at the edge of existing paved shoulder (4 ft away from the edge of sheet piling) and to install 495 ft (3 ft high) of pedestrian safety cable rail along the edge of the sheet piling. Soil will be excavated for installation of the MBGR posts and cable railing foundation.

Additional work includes installation¹ and removal of 520 ft of a temporary K-rail and its underlying 479 ft of AC strip (3.5 ft wide). Upon removal of the AC strip, the area will be filled and compacted with imported aggregate subbase (Class 2).

The refined project requires no ROW acquisition or utilities involvement.

¹ The temporary K-rail was installed on August 21, 2009, in compliance with Caltrans safety specifications. Fill (i.e., sand) was displaced during installation activities and later removed by hand from adjacent areas of vegetation in the presence of a biological monitor on August 26, 2009, as described in the Revised Biological Construction Monitoring and Impact Assessment Report (LSA, February 2010).

Environmental Analysis – Potential Impacts to Migratory and Nesting Birds

The refined project activities discussed above have the potential to affect migratory and nesting birds. Migratory nongame native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Section 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of all birds and their active nests, including raptors and other migratory nongame birds (as listed under the MBTA). To avoid disturbance to migratory birds, construction will be completed prior to March 1, 2011. However, if construction occurs after March 1, preconstruction nesting bird surveys within 300 ft of the construction work area shall be conducted by a qualified biologist at least 30 days prior to disturbance of any suitable nesting habitat. Surveys shall be conducted weekly, with the last survey completed no more than 3 days prior to the start of construction. If a nest is found, construction activities within 300 ft of the nest will be postponed until the nest has been vacated, juveniles have fledged, and there is no evidence of additional nest attempts. A qualified biologist shall be on site to serve as biological monitor during vegetation clearing, grading, and construction activities for the project to ensure that no take occurs.

Under the supervision of the biological monitor, bright orange plastic construction fencing, stakes, flags, or markers that are clearly visible to personnel on foot and in heavy equipment shall be used as limits to avoid any nests in areas of grading, staging, and avoidance for the proposed project.

No other appreciable changes to biological resources would occur as a result of the changes in the project.